



Mon, Jun 8, 2015. The US space agency now says it will try again tonight and has until Friday to carry out the launch. It has been developing a "UFO" of its own to send astronauts to the Red Planet by 2035.

A statement on its website today said: "On launch day -- currently slated for June 8 -- the LDSD test vehicle will be carried aloft by a large weather balloon."

On Friday it read: "Mission managers have postponed Friday's, June 5, Low-Density Supersonic Decelerator launch due to unstable wind conditions near the surface that would prevent the launch of the balloon. NASA will evaluate the next available launch opportunity, Saturday, June 6."

The NASA low-density supersonic decelerator (LDSD) project, has developed its own UFO-shaped space craft which will be launched off the coast of the U.S. Navy's Pacific Missile Range Facility in Kauai, Hawaii tomorrow night at 6.30pm.

It was due to happen at the same time on Tuesday, and then yesterday, but was rescheduled due to bad ocean weather conditions both times.

The test flight will involve the use of a balloon to transport the spacecraft high above Earth's atmosphere so extremely calm conditions are required for it to all go ahead.

The technology NASA used to land its unmanned Curiosity rover on Mars in 2012 won't work for a crewed mission. So, the UFO-style ship has been built to create the safest, most economical way of slowing spacecraft down once it enters the Martian atmosphere.

The flying saucer-shaped body is surrounded with a huge inflatable tube, which is only blown up later in the flight to slow it down.

The craft underwent preliminary tests in June 2014, when it was transported 120,000 feet above Earth. Here the thin atmosphere is similar to Mars.

After the balloon reaches the correct height, it explodes and powerful jets propel the "saucer" higher at 2,600 miles per hour - close to four times the speed of sound.

Then, when the spacecraft is 180,000 feet above the ground, SIAD, which is the giant inflatable dough-nut-shaped tube, inflates. Similar to how a puffer fish expands by filling itself with air, this makes the spacecraft larger and slows the speed.

By simply increasing the overall size of the spacecraft, SIAD can reduce its overall speed from 2,600 miles per hour to 1,500 miles per hour – still twice the speed of sound.

LDSD lead researcher Ian Clark, of NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California, USA, said of the previous test: "We saw things that we've never seen or imagined existed before.

"We saw a much more dynamic and much more turbulent parachute inflation than we had ever known. Things like the suspension lines exploding like lightning, moving in a very chaotic manner all over the place."